

# Arbra: Sanctuary In the Storm

## Planet Hoppers: June 2003

By [Cory Herndon](#)

Welcome to "Planet Hoppers," a new feature on the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* website. Each month, we'll bring you a set of articles on a particular world in the *Star Wars* galaxy that a Gamemaster can use separately or as a linked series of events.

June's subject is the secluded Outer Rim world of Arbra, a heavily forested planet that served as a main Rebel base after the Battle of Hoth. Be sure to check back each week for the next installment!

### Part 1: Hole In the Ground

In which the Alliance's Chief Logistics Officer offers an assessment of the new Rebel base.

### Part 2: Judge Him Not By His Size

In which Princess Leia supports the Hoojib leader Plif for a position in the New Republic Senate.

### Part 3: The Darker

In which C-3PO, R2-D2, and Chewbacca encounter an ancient horror that haunts Arbra's underground.

### Part 4: Rebels In Disguise

In which the Rebels on Arbra refit a flight wing of stolen TIEs to launch a daring hit-and-run attack.

### **About the Author**

One-time *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* editor Cory J. Herndon is now a freelancer. Cory's work has appeared in *Amazing Stories*, *Duelist*, *TopDeck*, *Star Wars Gamer*, *Dragon*, and *SCIFI.com*. He has done additional design work on the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* revised core rulebook (primarily the Droids chapter), *The Dark Side Sourcebook* (creatures and archetypes), and the *Wheel of Time Roleplaying Game*. He is also the author of Volumes 5 and 6 of the **Magic: The Gathering** *Encyclopedia*. Cory's short story "Like Spider's Silk" appears in the *Secrets of Magic* Anthology. He asks that you please purchase a copy of it and the **D&D** novel *The Living Dead* for every room in your home. Cory is currently authoring original content for Xbox.com, writing the third book in an upcoming *Magic: The Gathering* novel trilogy, and continuing to design *Star Wars Roleplaying Game* material for the Wizards website.

# Part 1: Hole In the Ground

Catalogued by Archivist Cory Herndon

*ARCHIVIST'S NOTE: Though the wisdom, compassion, and determination displayed by Senator Plif of Arbra has since become almost legendary, Arbra was once virtually unknown to the galaxy at large. The New Republic -- then under the name the Rebel Alliance -- rediscovered the planet while searching for a new permanent base for the forces evacuated from the Battle of Hoth. This report from Captain Mesa, Chief Logistics Officer for the Rebel base that came to be called "Hole in the Ground," depicts Arbra at the height of activity, when the former Echo soldiers made the planet their home, and before news of the second Death Star forced the Alliance to take desperate, aggressive action. The original file was heavily encrypted, but has now been declassified by Senatorial order.*

## **Logistics Report to Alliance Command Filed by Chief Logistics Officer, Colonel Kavel Mesa**

**Planet:** Arbra

**Planet Type:** Terrestrial

**Climate:** Temperate

**Terrain:** Rain forests, mountains, underground caves, ice caps, small seas

**Atmosphere:** Breathable

**Gravity:** 0.97 standard

**Diameter:** 11,887 km (nonspherical)

**Length of Day:** 24 standard hours

**Length of Year:** 380 local days

**Sentient Species:** Hoojibs, Humans, other alien species

**Languages:** Basic

**Population:** 1.2 million (Hoojibs), 7,525 (Humans), 470 (other species)

**Species Mix:** 99.9% Hoojib, 0.1% Humans and other

**Government:** Communal, with clan speakers

**Major Exports:** None

**Major Imports:** None

**System/Star:** Arbran

<b>Planets</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Moons</b>
Arbran I	Barren rock	0
Arbra	Terrestrial	1
Arbran III	Ice ball	2
Arbran IV	Gas giant	8
Arbran V	Gas giant	11
Arbran VI	Ice ball	0

**Sector:** Outer Rim

### Status Summary

It's been a tough few weeks, but I believe it's safe to say the forces commanded by Princess Leia and General Rieekan have made a miraculous find here in the Arbran system. The troops, pilots, and support personnel have ample room to work in the underground grotto that houses Haven Base. Furthermore, the place provides more power than we could ever need in the form of geothermal crystal formations that channel heat and electricity from the planet's own internal processes. The engineers had little difficulty building hangar facilities into the entrance grotto. My only concern with "Hole in the Ground" -- the name the base has picked up among the rank-and-file -- is that we only have one primary entrance and exit. The camouflaged, blast-shielded main door can take a pounding, but if it were blocked somehow by aerial bombardment, we would be trapped below ground. To that end, I have engineers digging new tunnels and an emergency exit for larger craft such as our transports. As you know, all ships larger than that -- meaning the bulk of our main fleet -- are hidden within Arbran's chromosphere, protected by temperature shielding, with roughly one-quarter of our starfighters kept onboard those ships in case of catastrophe on the ground.



After an initial meeting that nearly turned confrontational, our troops are getting along with the native Hoojibs quite well. Though we haven't yet been attacked on Arbra, I believe that the natives might be useful in a fight. The furry little guys can consume any kind of energy and drain a hand blaster in just a few seconds. If we had warning of an assault and Hoojibs were properly deployed, they could disable a great deal of Imperial weaponry before combat began.

## Part 2: Judge Him Not By His Size

Catalogued by Archivist Cory Herndon

*ARCHIVIST'S NOTE: The Hoojibs of Arbra are often mistaken for vermin. They are 25-centimeter-long rodents, after all, even if they are rodents with a vibrant, telepathic, nontechnological culture. Plif, the leader of the Hoojib clan that made first contact with the Rebels, was typical of the species -- long, flexible ears that could express a wide range of emotions, large yellow eyes with tiny black pupils, whitish fur (some individuals display yellow or even blue fur, but white is most common), and a small telepathic "antenna" atop his head that allows communication with virtually any being, living or artificial.*

*After the destruction of the second Death Star, the Rebel Alliance briefly attempted to unite the galaxy's free peoples under the name "Alliance of Free Planets." The following transcript represents a section of the nomination speech given by Princess Leia Organa supporting Plif of Arbra's petition to become his world's representative.*

On behalf of my friend and ally Plif, Hoojib of Arbra, I make the urgent recommendation that he be accepted into the Representative Body of the Alliance of Free Planets as the delegate from the Abran system. Few individual beings have done as much to help ensure the survival of our Rebellion against the Galactic Empire, and fewer still deserve a seat in the legislature as much as this wise and honorable being.

If the council would indulge me, I would like to recount some of the events that led to the formation of the alliance between the Hoojibs and the Rebellion. Of course, I need not remind you of the losses we suffered on Hoth when the Empire launched a ground assault on our base there. After months on the run from the Empire, we believed that on Arbra we had found the perfect sanctuary. Plif of the Hoojibs greeted us openly, after some initial mistrust on both sides that we soon bridged with telepathic and verbal communication.

We fought side-by-side against the predatory creature that threatened the Hoojib's home -- Plif's people with wits and intelligence, the Rebels with cunning and force. After the slivilith was destroyed, we got a good look at the wondrous Hoojib grottoes, with a natural source of limitless energy and ample room for our people. Some of my team, tired of our long flight, attempted to take the caverns from the Hoojibs. Because they were small. Because they couldn't fight back. Yet the Hoojibs stood fast, ready to do whatever they could to save their own home. Suddenly, we were the Empire, ready to take the homes of free, civilized people because they had what we needed, and we were bigger. Stronger. I ordered my team to stand down, apologized to Plif, and prepared to leave.

Thousands of beings joined the Rebellion because the Empire had attacked their homeworlds or because they were shocked into action by atrocities. And this is why you must grant noble Plif a seat on this august body. Rather than let us return to space, Plif and his fellow Hoojibs offered to share their home with us. To join our fight against the oppression of Palpatine's Empire. With Plif guiding their collective conscience, they chose to join our struggle even after we had threatened them . . . because it was the *right thing* to do.

I have taken Plif's counsel on countless occasions; it is advice both wise and, whenever possible, gentle. I put to you that this Alliance of Free Planets cannot remain true to its founding principles without someone like Plif to help guide us.

**Plif:** Male Hoojib Diplomat 10/Noble 2; Init +0 (Dex); Def 18 (+4 class,+4 size); Spd 4 m; VP/WP 4/4; Attack +7/+2 melee (1 pt, bite) or +10/+5 ranged; SQ Bonus class skill (Bluff), energy drain, favor +1, inspire confidence, telepathy; SV Fort +0, Ref +5, Will +14; SZ D; FP 4; DSP 0; Rep +3; Str 4, Dex 10, Con 4, Int 18, Wis 18, Cha 20; Challenge Code C.

**Equipment:** None.

**Skills:** Bluff +22, Diplomacy +25, Gather Information +21, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (Arbra) +17, Listen +10, Search +8, Sense Motive +22, Spot +9, Survival +10.



A slivilith

**Feats:** Heroic Surge, Persuasive, Skill Emphasis (Diplomacy), Skill Emphasis (Intimidate), Skill Emphasis (Sense Motive), Trustworthy, Weapon Group Proficiencies (blaster pistols, simple weapons).

### **Special Qualities**

*Energy Drain* -- By being in physical contact with a piece of equipment or living being that contains energy of any sort, a Hoojib can absorb that energy as food. A Hoojib can also attempt to drain an object within 4 meters by making a successful DC 10 Con check. Every round, a Hoojib can drain 1d3 shots, hours of use, or Vitality points (in the case of a droid with heroic levels) from weapon power packs, droids, or other mechanical devices.

*Telepathy* -- A Hoojib can communicate telepathically with any number of living or mechanical beings within 500 meters. A being that wishes to resist telepathic contact with a Hoojib must make a Will saving throw against DC 12 plus the Hoojib's Wisdom bonus. The resistant being must also be aware that the Hoojib is attempting to make such contact, meaning that the Hoojib has probably already "said" something. A successful save denies the Hoojib telepathic contact for that round; the Hoojib may try again the next round. Those communicating with Hoojibs "hear" the words in their own primary language.

## Part 3: The Darker

*Catalogued by Archivist Cory Herndon*

*ARCHIVIST'S NOTE: Arbra holds many mysteries. How did a species as unique as the Hoojibs evolve? How do the cavern crystals channel geothermal energy? How did such a resource-rich planet, even on the Outer Rim, evade Imperial attention for so very long? The following compilation of Rebel records hints at discoveries that may hold the answers to some of these questions.*

### Debriefing Transcript RA44390/C-3PO

The entire nasty affair occurred just before Master Luke, the Princess, and Lando Calrissian resumed efforts to find Captain Solo in earnest. After the mission briefing, there were a few hours to pass before we departed. At that moment, I noticed that jabbering malcontent Artoo Detoo had disappeared! I learned from Plif the Hoojib that my counterpart had wandered off down a dark tunnel, believing he had heard a cry for help. Obviously, he needs to have his logic circuits checked.

*[Several paragraphs describing R2-D2's shortcomings deleted]*

Plif assured me that Artoo was in great peril, though of what kind he could not say. With hours to go before departure, I convinced Chewbacca to join me in the search, just in case the Hoojibs had been correct. The Hoojibs joined us, and we headed down the tunnel where Artoo had last been seen.

The wonders we discovered. Why, did you know, there's an entire *city* under this base? Or at least, there was. But I'm getting ahead of myself. The Hoojibs claim they have no idea who built it, and it certainly was not them. In fact, the architecture hearkened back to the days of Xim the Despot, if memory circuits serve me right.

*[Lengthy discussion of pre-Republic architecture deleted]*

This city, which occupied a grotto perhaps ten times the size of the base's starship hangar, was completely surrounded by an energy field that was somehow sensitive to aggressive, negative emotions.

Once inside the boundaries of the city, we quickly located my missing counterpart. Artoo had been disassembled! Before we could free him, we encountered the strangest being I think I've ever met. The city, it claimed, had been built by "ancient Arbrans" many millennia before the Hoojibs first gained sentience. These ancient people, according to this being that called itself "The Darker," had shed their "negative emotions" and left their planet -- and those emotions -- behind, trapped within the field that surrounded the necropolis. The Darker was the manifestation of those emotions.



After greeting us cordially, the creature (acting according to its nature, I suppose) turned on us, threatening to feed off our emotions -- especially those of Chewbacca -- and free itself from captivity. The Darker somehow converted Chewbacca's loyalty into pure hatred, and the flea-bitten furball turned on me! I fled the scene, taking refuge in a building that turned out to be an ancient library. As I am fluent in over six million forms of communication, I set about searching for some clue that would help us escape this atrocious predicament. Just before Chewbacca found me, I discovered our salvation in an ancient text, which bore some similarity to ancient Sith. But I digress.

The key was this: The energy field did not just *contain* the Darker. If the creature came in contact with the field, it would absorb the creature's energies and destroy it. The ancient Arbrans had not been able to bring themselves to do this, but it was our only chance. And the only being that could force the Darker into the field was Chewbacca. In a display of remarkable bravery, if I do say so myself, I faced down the Wookiee and convinced him to fight the Darker's control (reminding him of Captain Solo's plight did the trick).

The Darker's collision with the field destroyed both in a blinding implosion of energy. Apparently, the field had been somehow protecting the city as well. The entire place started to come apart at the seams, and had it not been for Chewbacca, I doubt Artoo, the Hoojibs, or I would have been able to escape in time. I'm afraid that the entrance to the underground city has completely collapsed, and the city may have been destroyed as well. Regardless, I heartily recommend the posting of guards at that location.

*[Lengthy description of perceived security issues at Haven Base deleted.]*

## **Addendum: Commander Luke Skywalker, Personal Log**

I've only just now had a chance to talk to Threepio about the strange things he saw deep beneath the base. His story is hard to believe, but Chewie, Artoo, and Plif swore it all happened. I find it even harder to believe that I have been sitting on top of what was obviously a huge focal point of dark side energy for so long without noticing it. But I think I've hit upon an explanation.

We've never been able to figure out how Arbra's energy *crystals* work. We're not even sure they're really crystal; they certainly don't behave like any other minerals anyone's ever seen. But what if the process isn't chemical or geological? What if the energy flows from the Force?

Master Yoda spoke often of the importance of balance. At the time, I had supposed he was giving me fencing instructions, but it may have been something more. The Force may require balance, *need* balance, in some ways. Threepio said that the "negative energy field" that kept this "Darker" trapped down below was sensitive to negative energy -- could block it, absorb it, whatever -- and that it was situated almost directly below the geothermal crystals that provide us with power.

I believe that the field absorbed excess negative energy from the Darker for millennia. As a counterpoint, the Force balanced this with an output of what I can only call "positive energy." This could explain the seemingly endless bounty of power, and it could even explain how the Hoojibs evolved in the first place. And though we've noticed no depletion of the energy coming from the crystals, it's possible that the Darker's destruction will eventually mean the end of that "limitless" power source. I've notified Leia of the possibility, and she's making sure the techs keep an eye on the crystals' output.

Once I finish my training and this war is over, I will have to investigate further.



## Part 4: Rebels In Disguise

Catalogued by Archivist Cory Herndon

*ARCHIVIST'S NOTE: One of the most successful Rebel missions launched from Arbra during the Galactic Civil War was a raid that took place a few parsecs from the Sullust system. The Rebels used rebuilt TIE fighters purchased from a disreputable arms dealer to intercept and infiltrate an Imperial armada under the command of one Admiral Giel. The armada -- quite possibly the largest in Imperial history -- was transporting a unique creature called the Teezl to Coruscant. The Teezl, believed to be the only one of its kind, was a natural hyperspace communications amplifier. In short, if the Empire had been able to get the Teezl to Coruscant, the Imperial Navy would have been capable of instantaneous communication and coordination throughout the galaxy. Alliance leaders believed, rightly so, that this could mean the end of their cause.*

*Only two of the modified TIE fighters survived the battle that saw the end of the Teezl, those flown by Captain Thorben and Commander Skywalker. They are believed to be still in service, used by New Republic Intelligence for occasional fact-finding forays into the Imperial Remnant. This status report from Thorben, who oversaw the refit of the TIEs, describes the modifications in detail.*

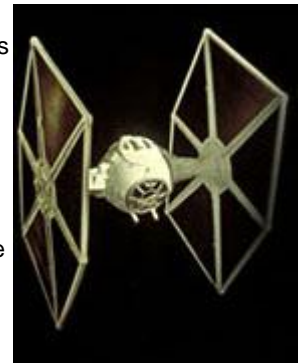
### Operation Earplug Status Report

**Filed by Captain Hanc Thorben, Refit Supervisor, "Flying Bantha Squadron"**

Our new TIE fighters are ready to go into action immediately. The recent sortie at the Empire's Spindrift outpost proved without a doubt that the fighters will pass for the real thing, and the command codes that will allow us into the armada have been retrieved. As expected, the TIEs handle poorly in an atmosphere; they're about as aerodynamic as a power droid. But while they may not be X-wings, they should do the job.

My team of tech specialists has made several modifications that will ensure success, though I still have doubts that this will be anything but a one-way trip. However, if that's the way it has to be, that's the way it has to be.

The normal TIE power plant has been refurbished and augmented to provide some shielding, a hyperdrive, and a small navcomputer, none of which these little tin cans normally have. Really, how the Empire got where it is by sending pilots out in these brittle little things is beyond me. I had hoped to add a small torpedo launcher module, but the techs informed me that such a thing would be too easily noticed, so instead the primary laser cannons have been rewired to fire only six shots -- which should be sufficient to tear through any shielding, get at the Teezl's holding chamber, and accomplish the mission. Since there will be no way to recharge weapons once we engage the enemy, our chances of getting out once the Teezl has been destroyed are very, very slim unless we conserve our shots.



One more thing -- in outfitting the cockpit to interface with our flight gear, we decided to replace the original seats with ejection models. Though I would not want to be the pilot who goes EV in the middle of an Imperial armada, the seats are there if we need them. Who knows? They might just save someone's life. Just because it's a suicide mission doesn't mean we have to step into the noose willingly.

If our small squadron does make it back in one piece, these TIEs could be used for a variety of missions, with great espionage possibilities. So I'll hope for the best and recommend them for further service as needed.

**Craft:** Flying Bantha Squadron Rebel-modified TIE fighter  
**Class:** Starfighter  
**Size:** Diminutive (6.3 m long)  
**Hyperdrive:** x 0.5  
**Passengers:** None  
**Cargo Capacity:** 40 kg  
**Consumables:** 1 day  
**Cost:** 40,000 (estimate, not normally for sale)  
**Maximum Speed in Space:** Ramming (10 squares/action)  
**Atmospheric Speed:** 1200 km/h (20 squares/action)  
**Crew:** 1 (Skilled +4)



**Initiative:** +8 (+4 size, +4 crew)

**Maneuver:** +8 (+4 size, +4 crew)

**Defense:** 24 (+4 size, +10 armor)

**Shield Points:** 30 (DR 5)

**Hull Points:** 60 (DR 5)

**Weapons:** Modified laser cannons\* (2 fire-linked, 6 shots only); **Fire Arc:** Front; **Attack Bonus:** +16 (+4 size, +4 crew, +8 fire control); **Damage:** 10d10x2; **Range Modifiers:** PB +4, S +2, M -2, L n/a.

*\*Laser cannons may be reset to the original configuration (see the chapter on starships in the Star Wars Roleplaying Game revised core rulebook for normal TIE weapon settings) with a DC 14 Repair check.*

## A New Permanent Base

For this month's "Planet Hoppers" feature, we once again delve into Marvel Comics' archives for the planet Arbra, a forest world with a dark history that served the Rebel Alliance as a more-or-less permanent base after the harried retreat from Hoth. Arbra was the creation of writer David Michelinie, who introduced the planet in Marvel's *Star Wars* #55, "Plif!" with artists Walt Simonson and Tom Palmer.

This issue established the great underground cavern that would become the Rebel base; the intelligent, telepathic (and darn cute) Hoojibs; and the almost magically replenished energy source that made the planet the perfect hidden base. Though the planet was not fully explored before the events of *Return of the Jedi* intruded on the proceedings, the pre-*Jedi* issues of *Star Wars* did provide some tantalizing clues about Rebel protocols as well as Arbra's long history. Issue #58 showed a different side of Arbra, as the Rebels struggled to hide their forces underground while hiding the main Rebel fleet within the Arbran sun itself.

Check out Arbra for yourself in the Marvel issues listed above, or look for Dark Horse Comics' trade paperback collection *A Long Time Ago . . . Vol. 4: Screams in the Void*.

